

MISSOURI SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY PANEL

*Advising the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education on
Implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act*

June 2014

Chair

Jerry Neal

Vice Chair

Patricia Kopetz

Secretary

Martha Crabtree

Dear Citizens of Missouri:

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires each State Education Agency (SEA) to establish a committee to provide advice regarding programs and services for children with disabilities. The Special Education Advisory Panel (SEAP) serves in that capacity for the Special Education Office of the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE).

SEAP represents stakeholders who have specific knowledge of, and interest in special education. It plays an important role in representing the various constituencies who are impacted by, or have an interest in special education in Missouri.

The primary function of SEAP is to provide policy guidance on special education and related services and carry out those specific and general functions set forth in law. SEAP exists to perform five enumerated functions:

1. advise DESE of unmet needs within the state in the education of children with disabilities;
2. provide public comments on any rules or regulations proposed by the state regarding the education of children with disabilities;
3. advise DESE regarding the development of evaluations and reporting of data to the U.S. Department of Education;
4. advise DESE regarding the development of corrective action plans to address finding identified in federal monitoring reports; and,
5. advise DESE regarding the development and implementation of policies related to the coordination of services for children with disabilities.

The Panel accomplishes this charge by convening to review items and offer comments and recommendations related to proposed rules and regulations, advisement of reports to and from the U.S. Department of Education, and other special education issues brought to the Panel.

SEAP's duties, responsibilities, and membership categories are defined in the IDEA and include parents of children with disabilities, individuals with disabilities, public school teachers and administrators, representatives of charter and private schools, as well as representatives from various state agencies and organizations.

The work of SEAP occurs at regularly scheduled meetings of the entire Panel, as well as subcommittees (Evaluation, Rules and Regulations, Monitoring, Programs, Nominations, and Public Comment). The Panel meets quarterly throughout each year and meeting dates are posted on the DESE website at:

<http://dese.mo.gov/special-education/advisory-panels/seap/meetings>.

Per Sunshine Law, SEAP's meetings are open to the public. SEAP welcomes and encourages comments from constituents statewide regarding concerns or issues faced by students with disabilities, their families, and the professionals who work with them. The comments are viewed by the Public Comment Committee members only and shared with the Panel at the quarterly meetings. The public may submit comments to the Panel via email at: seapcomments@gmail.com.

This letter is intended to serve as our annual report to provide an overview of the responsibilities and activities of the SEAP during the 2013-14 school year. For more complete information about SEAP activities, we encourage a visit to the following website:

<http://dese.mo.gov/special-education/advisory-panels/special-education-advisory-panel-seap>.

SEAP and the Office of Special Education have had an active year. For a review of our SEAP activities, please visit the following website:

<http://dese.mo.gov/special-education/advisory-panels/seap/meeting-minutes>.

Here are just a few highlights of SEAP activities:

- **MAP-A Eligibility and Tiered Monitoring Process Regarding Special Education Compliance** presented by Nancy Thomas, Assistant Director, Special Education Compliance. Information on MAP-A eligibility and the tiered monitoring process was presented to the Panel. To view the Alternative Assessment webinar recording go to: <http://dese.mo.gov/communications/webinar/alternate-assessment-guidance-iep-teams>.
- **Missouri Connections** presented by Tom Schlimpert, Career Education, Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. Missouri Connections <http://missouriconnections.org/> online program is a web-based resource to help Missouri citizens determine their career interests, explore occupations, establish education plans, develop job search strategies, and create resumes. Sponsored by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and the Department of Economic Development, Missouri Connections is available to students, parents, guidance counselors, educators, and job seekers at no charge.
- **Missouri Transition Planning – Resource Locator** – A subcommittee of the Missouri Interagency Transition Team (MITT) created a list of resources beneficial to parents and/or individuals with a disability. Go to <http://dese.mo.gov/special-education/advisory-panels/seap/seap-meeting-handouts> to review the list. MITT partnered with the Governor's Council on Disabilities (GCD) to develop a disability portal <http://disability.mo.gov/MITT.htm>. The Panel was asked to review the resources and website and provide feedback to the Panel. The Governor's Council also provides a searchable resource by region/county.

- **Summary Data for Special Education** – The Assistant Commissioner for the Office of Special Education discussed in detail the new Results Driven Accountability data. To review handouts associated with these discussions, go to <http://dese.mo.gov/special-education/advisory-panels/seap/seap-meeting-handouts>. The U. S. Department of Education is focusing more on student outcomes to create a better balance with the compliance component. Missouri has volunteered to be monitored by the U. S. Department of Education. Based on an analysis of data, improved academic outcomes was determined to be the greatest need. Copies of the Missouri Collaborative Work document were provided to panel members for their review and input. Additional information about Collaborative Work can be found at <http://dese.mo.gov/special-education/effective-practices/collaborative-work>. The data analysis and Collaborative Work will be the major focus of the State Systemic Improvement Plan required by the U. S. Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP).

Citizens of this great state who are interested in serving on SEAP are encouraged to review the membership requirements and consider submitting an application for SEAP membership. Thank you for your continued interest in the academic advancement and well-being of children with disabilities.

Sincerely,

Jerry D. Neal

Jerry Neal
Chairperson, 2013-14